

SHARED READING GOES HIGH-TECH

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Shared reading is a powerful technique for teaching reading skills and strategies. Enlarged texts provide opportunities for the development of fluency through choral reading, as well as lessons on word identification and more (Gill, 2006). Recent technologies make this technique even easier; interactive whiteboards (IWBs) can project enlarged texts from computer programs or online sources and also provide opportunities for students to interact with the text.

As IWBs have become more common in schools, researchers have asked questions about their effectiveness for improving student learning. Although IWBs appear to increase student motivation and engagement (the European Commission, 2007; Shenton & Pagett, 2007; Wood & Ashfield, 2008), studies of the effect of IWBs on student achievement are rare. One such study involving 85 teachers and 170 classrooms found that “in general, using interactive whiteboards was associated with a 16 percentile point gain in student achievement” (Marzano, 2009, p. 80). In a study of the use of IWBs for literacy instruction in six primary classrooms in England, Shenton and Pagett (2007) described teachers using the “many tools for drawing visual attention to print, including enlargement with the

magnifier” (p. 129), highlighting texts with color, and moving words on the board into categories. They concluded, however, that professional development to date has focused on mastering the technology rather than considering “the whole context of teaching interactively with IWBs” (p. 135). Similarly, Wood and Ashfield (2008) concluded,

Essentially, there appears to be the potential for enhancements in whole-class teaching and learning through the use of IWBs if pedagogic practice were to adapt and change through creative and innovative use of the particular features of this new technology. (p. 87)

In this article we describe one such creative and innovative use of the IWB for shared reading.

Shared reading, also known as shared book experience, was described by Don Holdaway (1979) as a way to simulate in a classroom the reading experiences young children have when they are read to by a parent. Shared reading in the elementary classroom provides children with repeated

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experiences with texts, often until they are memorized, using an enlarged text so that all students can see. Young children have the opportunity to behave like readers and have successful reading experiences, and teachers can demonstrate strategies used by readers. Repeated readings of the text, and follow-up activities that draw children's attention to the print, can help children learn concepts of print such as directionality and builds students' sight word vocabularies.

Braunger and Lewis (2006) identified shared reading as one teaching model that has been "documented as important to include in effective reading programs" (p. 113). This powerful teaching technique has been recommended for English learners (Drucker, 2003) and for struggling readers (Allington, 2001). Although shared reading is most often associated with prereaders and beginning readers, we have used it with second graders to provide for successful, pleasurable reading for all and to teach a variety of reading strategies.

A number of authors have described shared reading in its "low-tech" form (Butler, 1994; Butler & Turbill, 1987; Gill, 2006, 1996; Holdaway, 1979; Mooney, 1990; Parkes, 2000; Powell, 1990; Slaughter, 1993). Shared reading requires a text in an enlarged format, such as a Big Book or a poem written on poster board. The teacher and students read the poem together many times, often dividing into groups or adding actions or sound effects, focusing on enjoyment and reading with success and fluency. Follow-up activities help children focus on the print. For example, to help children just learning to map the spoken word onto the written word, the teacher can write the lines of the poem on sentence strips and place them in a pocket chart out of order; students can

then use their memory of the poem and their developing knowledge of letters to help them sequence the lines. Each student can then be given a copy of the poem with the lines out of order for cutting and pasting together in sequence.

For slightly more advanced students, teachers might mix up the individual words of a line and have students work on putting them back in order. To teach students to use context clues, removable glue stick and bits of construction paper can be used to mask words. Teachers might mask all except the onset of a word and have children use both context clues and letter clues to identify the unknown word. To help call students' attention to onset or rimes in a poem, teachers can use highlighting tape.

Poster board, removable glue sticks, highlighting tape, a pocket chart, and sentence strips are tools frequently used in low-tech shared reading. Other tools for shared reading are commercially available, including Big Books, poetry charts, and even fly swatters with holes cut out of them to help children focus on particular words or parts of words. However, with some of the new technologies available in many classrooms, making enlarged texts and manipulating text has become easier than ever.

Using IWBs, such as the SMART board, teachers can easily create enlarged texts and text manipulation activities for shared reading. Instead of purchasing Big Books or buying or creating poetry posters, providing a large text for shared reading is as easy as typing a poem onto the class computer or even finding a suitable poem or other text online and projecting the document or webpage onto the screen. Some teachers we know have created collections of poems

for shared reading using PowerPoint. They create an attractive slide, often with an illustration, for each poem in their collection. Illustrations and different colors, sizes, and types of fonts can help capture students' interest. A document camera can also be used to project a page from a book onto the IWB. Once projected onto the IWB, the text is large enough for the whole class to see easily for choral reading.

Texts can also be manipulated on the IWB to build sight word vocabulary, phonics skills, and other reading strategies. Teachers can easily type a poem into a SMART board Notebook page (creating a new text box for each line by simply moving the cursor down the page) and then have students touch the screen and drag the text boxes to rearrange the lines.

Drawing students' attention to a particular word or part of a word is as simple as picking up one of the pens and circling the word. With one click, the pen becomes a highlighter, so that word parts such as onsets and rimes can be easily highlighted, or teachers can draw students' attention to parts of words with text color.

In Figure 1, the lines of the poem are out of order, ready for students to drag them into the correct sequence, and the rime *-ay* has been highlighted. In Figure 2, students can drag letters to make other words with the *-ay* rime.

*"Using IWBs, teachers
can easily create
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shared reading."*

TAKE ACTION!

Follow these steps to create shared reading lessons with the interactive whiteboard.

1. Find a text. Short poems, nursery rhymes, and songs make good shared reading. The text can be typed onto the computer using Word or the SMART board Notebook software and illustrated with clip art. You can also project texts from online resources such as www.starfall.com.
2. Identify skills and strategies to teach. You may chose to focus on phonemic awareness, phonics, strategies such as using context clues, or even punctuation or grammar.
3. Read the poem together with the children. Pointing to each word as you read will help younger readers learn directionality and map the spoken word onto the written word. Maintain students' interest during repeated readings by reading the poem in groups or adding motions or sounds.
4. Teach skills or strategies using the text. For example:

- Use colored rectangles to cover words and have students use context clues to predict the word.
- Use highlighting to focus students' attention on onset or rimes.
- Let students manipulate and sequence the lines of the poem.
- Let students manipulate word parts to create words from the poem and similar words.
- Focus students' attention on elements within the poem (such as contractions) as a way to introduce a follow-up lesson.

5. Extend students' learning through writing activities, such as writing an innovation of the poem, which can be published in book format or as a PowerPoint presentation. Students' new versions of a poem can then be used for further shared reading.

Figure 1 Students Can Touch and Drag the Lines of the Poem to Put Them in Order



Figure 2 Students Can Touch and Drag Letters to Create Words With the Rime -ay



To teach a lesson on using context clues, shapes can quickly be created to cover a word, and children can make guesses based on what would make sense and by looking at beginning letter clues. The shape can then be moved to reveal the word (see Figure 3). In Figure 4, the teacher has created a follow-up sight word activity on color words using the SMART board's Checker Tool.

IWBs get students' attention because the board incorporates the sights, sounds, and stimulation that different types of learners thrive on (Charlene, 2007). Many teachers feel that the bright,

Figure 3 Words Can Be Masked to Teach Context Clues

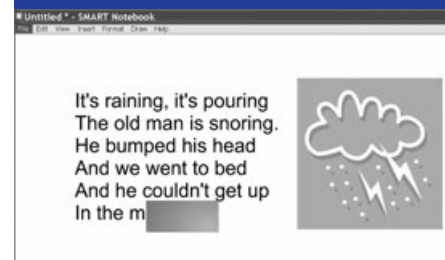


Figure 4 Students Read the Poem, Then Follow Up by Dragging the Color Word to the Correct Box



colorful print, especially if it moves and makes a sound, captures students' attention, maintains their concentration, and motivates them to learn (Wood & Ashfield, 2008).

Wood and Ashfield (2008) emphasized the need for teachers to engage with technology not just as consumers, but also as designers and developers, "fusing technology with pedagogy" so that "teachers are not merely equipped with the resources and technical capability, but also have a clear understanding of children's learning and how this may be facilitated within whole-class lessons" using technology

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(p. 95). Shared reading with the IWB is a simple example of how teachers can use technology to improve teaching and learning.

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MORE TO EXPLORE

IRA Books

- *Essential Readings on Early Literacy* edited by Dorothy S. Strickland
- *Read, Write, Play, Learn: Literacy Instruction in Today's Kindergarten* by Lori Jamison Rog

IRA Journal Article

- "Shared Reading to Build Vocabulary and Comprehension" by Ted Kesler, *The Reading Teacher*, December 2010

Erratum

In "The Jones Family's Culture of Literacy" by A.S. Johnson, 2010, *The Reading Teacher*, 64(1), p. 43, attribution was erroneously omitted on the "Take Action!" sidebar, which was contributed by elementary teacher Lisa Stockdale, Cassatt, South Carolina, USA. The online version of the article has been corrected with the appropriate byline.